

**"Marked Version Showing Changes Made to the Amended CLAIMS"**

23. (amended) The method of claim 22, wherein said step of heating further comprises moving said [a-]first end of said preform assembly longitudinally into a heated zone of a furnace means such that fusion begins at said first end and progresses toward said second end as said preform assembly is moved through said heated zone.

32. (amended) The method of claim [30]14, wherein said second glass rods further comprise a co-dopant species for increasing the solubility of said one or more rare-earth dopant elements and for adjusting a refractive index[~~, said co-dopant selected from the list of elements consisting of boron, aluminum, silicon, phosphorous, germanium, fluorine, zinc, zirconium, titanium, sulfur, selenium, and tellurium~~].

34. (amended) A method~~[The method of claim 8]~~ for providing a glass preform for use as a source for drawing an optical fiber having a reduced capacity for propagation of amplified spontaneous emission, the method comprising the steps of:

collecting a plurality of first glass rods into a substantially contiguous bundle, wherein each of said first glass rods comprises a chemical composition and has a substantially uniform shape; and

removing and replacing one or more groups of contiguous first glass rods with an equivalent number of groups comprising second glass rods, said second

glass rods comprising a chemical composition and having a substantially uniform shape, said second glass rods comprising a physical or chemical property having a different value than a value of said same physical or chemical property of said first glass rods, and wherein said second glass rods comprise a means for eliminating or substantially reducing propagation of amplified spontaneous emission;

heating said contiguous bundle to a glass fusion temperature and causing said contiguous bundle to fuse to form a solid glass preform such that said chemical composition of each of said first glass rods is maintained in a location proximate or about coincident with a position of each said glass rods within said contiguous bundle.

38. (amended) The method of claim[ 37]35, wherein said means for eliminating or substantially reducing propagation of amplified spontaneous emission comprises a metal dopant[~~containing one or more elements selected from the list consisting of terbium, titanium, and zirconium~~].

49. (amended) The method of claim [48]39, wherein said second glass rods further comprise a co-dopant species for increasing the solubility of said one or more rare-earth dopant elements and for adjusting a refractive index[~~said co-dopant selected from the list of elements consisting of boron, aluminum, silicon, phosphorous, germanium, fluorine, zinc, zirconium, titanium, sulfur, selenium, and tellurium~~].

51. (amended) The method of claim[ 50]39, wherein said first quantity of glass rods further comprise [~~a metal~~] one or more dopant compounds for substantially

reducing or eliminating amplified spontaneous emission [~~, said metal dopant selected from the list consisting of terbium, titanium, and zirconium~~].